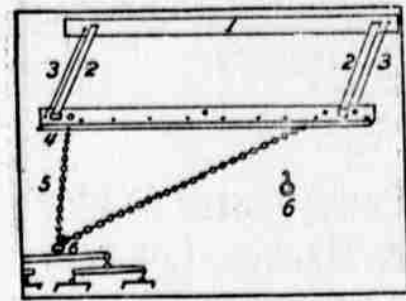


## ROAD AND FARM IMPROVEMENT

**MAKING OF GOOD ROADS.**  
Methods Applied Successfully by a Road Supervisor of State of Nebraska.

I have been road supervisor in this locality and have used the King method of improving our bottom roads, writes a Nebraska correspondent of the Rural New Yorker. As the road drag does not give satisfaction on level roads, it is most essential to grade roads, so as to give a good drain from center to ditch. Remove all rocks and roots possible, and see that water does not stand in ditches more than is necessary.



THE ROAD DRAG.

On account of not being able to drain them. After every rain, as soon as ground is crumbly, hitch up to a drag, stand it so as to work dirt toward center of road, and you will soon see a difference in the roads; they will not get as muddy, or be cut up as badly as before.

As to the construction of drag, which must be made of good strong material, it requires two planks 3x6, six feet long, marked 1 in diagram; two pieces of 4x4, three feet long; 2; two iron rods with bur; 3; one steel plate three inches wide, sharpened and bolted on front plank slanting slightly forward, 4; one heavy long chain, straight link, 5; ten feet long, and bolted on front plank; one adjustable ring on chain to fasten doubletree, 6. Always hitch four horses to drag if you wish to do good work. Nail boards across drag on 4x4 so a common farm wagon seat can be fastened on for the drivers to ride, or if the drivers prefer to walk place some other weight on drag. If drag should slide toward ditch adjust link on chain, so as to run more level, and if it does not deliver dirt to center slant it until it does.

### MARKETING MUSK MELONS.

How One Producer Disposed of His Crop at a Gratifying Profit.

Before beginning to ship we made arrangements with a commission firm to handle our whole crop, says an Illinois gardener. We told them about how many baskets we expected to have and how we would grade and mark them. This arrangement proved much more satisfactory than shipping to half a dozen or more firms, as had been our previous custom.

My experience the past season confirms the belief that the way to make money out of melon growing is to build up a reputation for shipping good goods and have your own brand or trade mark. We made 18 shipments to our commission man and had goods in every shipment that sold at the highest price. This result was secured by holding up the quality. As the season progressed we culled closer and closer. This naturally gave us a smaller proportion of fancy and No. 1 melons, but we had the satisfaction of getting the top price from first to last for our best goods—that bore our trade mark.

A month after the melon season was over the salesman who had charge of selling our fruit said it was a pleasure to handle such goods. It hurt the customers at first to pay more than they could get other melons for, but after they once got started they almost fought to get our fruit before it was gone and it attracted the attention of salesmen of other houses who could not get such prices as we got for our melons. The crates containing our fancy melons were ordered ahead and the salesman often had to cut down all the orders so as to divide up the goods and let each customer have some. He said he will have no trouble next year selling all the fancy and No. 1 stock we can raise, as the buyers had a good enough sample this year to remember the brand.

### FARM PICKINGS.

Green grass as a mulch rots too quickly.

In harvest time a scythe in the hand is worth two in a tree.

Try to keep seed out of the ground until it has been made fit.

Mow the weeds by the highway and scatter blue grass seed.

Young man, wash the buggy before the mud dries.—Farm Journal.

Weeds on the highway deteriorate from the appearance of the farm.

The home of the farmer should be as attractive as the home of the citizen.

To a hungry man the distance from the back field to the dinner table is long.

It is evident that sheep are becoming more popular on many farms. We wish we had a few right now to eat the grass and weeds in fence corners.

The work of plant lice on pea vines is sometimes mistaken for blight.

Whale oil soap solution will kill the lice if you can spray it all over the vines.

### KEEPING DOWN WEEDS.

This Is a Problem Which the Farmer Meets in All Sections of the Country.

The problem of how to keep down weeds is one which the farmer meets in all sections of the country. In west central Illinois in the low lands in wet seasons this is a serious proposition in the corn fields, and the weeds seem more prevalent in the stubble land left over from the year before unless it has been plowed immediately after the wheat crop has been taken off. On the ideal farm there would be no weeds, either along the roads, in the cultivated fields, or in the pastures, and with a little care and the proper attention at the right time this condition of things is not at all impossible.

On the upland, the problem is a good deal more simple than in the bottoms, yet it is not impossible on the low lands. We American people are too much inclined to go after great things and on an expansive idea rather than improve our lands and practice intensive cultivation instead of extensive cultivation. In this section of the country, continues the correspondent, in writing to the Farmers' Review, red clover and cow peas grow to perfection and some few experiments have been made with alfalfa, which we believe will be a success here. We have followed a plan in the last four years of sowing our corn ground in cow peas on the last plowing of the corn, and instead of weeds we have had a fairly good crop of peas, which have added to the fertility of the soil more than enough to pay the expense of the seed and the sowing of the peas, and we could see no evil effect on the yield of the corn crop from the fact of the peas being sown in the corn. The corn did not seem to ripen any sooner nor did it fire on the lower blades any worse on account of the peas. The first frost partially destroyed the pea vines and they were not so hard to plow under as a crop of weeds would have been.

In the pasture and woodlands we have kept a flock of Angora goats, which are sure death to all forms of weeds and sprouts. Cockle burrs and jimson weeds, morning glory and rag weed are as much a delicacy to them as the first mess of lettuce or a dish of strawberries is to the individual. We have heard it said, and have seen it written many times, that in a pasture which would just keep a given number of sheep there could be placed an equal number of goats and all would thrive. We think this is true from what experience we have had. Sheep or goats may be turned on the cornfield after the corn is a foot or 15 inches high and kept there until the corn is hard enough to feed without injury to the corn and they are of great service in the lowlands and prairie in this way.

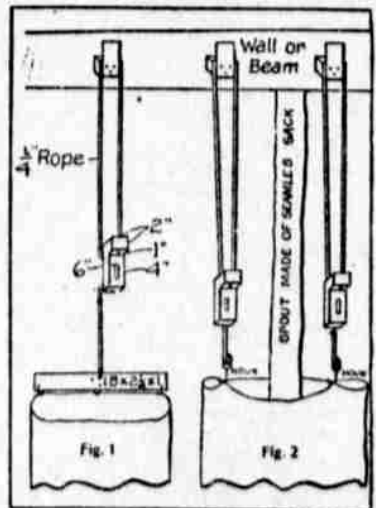
The most difficult proposition is in keeping the weeds down in our timothy fields, but we believe this can be helped by pasturing with goats and sheep late in the fall and early in the spring. The milk weed is about the hardest to eradicate from the meadow, and as timothy is a very profitable crop, it is of considerable importance that it be kept free from weeds.

We have seen very little good from the state law governing the destruction of obnoxious weeds and in portions of our country have seen Canada thistles thriving in the pasture and fields and their seed blowing over the country as though they were the main crop and something to be desired. These laws are like all others; a good law not enforced becomes an encumbrance to our statutes and does no good.

### LABOR-SAVING SACK HOLDER.

Device Which Will Simplify the Filling of Bags with Grain, Etc.

A handy sack holder, the device of a correspondent of the American Miller, is shown in the illustration. The ma-



HANDY SACK HOLDER.

terials used in its construction did not cost more than 25 cents, and yet the device saves the labor of one man.

The holder can be raised or lowered to suit the height of the sack being filled, by catching the board, or lower rope, with one hand and raising or lowering the block with the other.

### Ant Remedies.

1. Trace them to the nest and destroy by pouring in kerosene, benzine, gasoline, or carbon bisulphide. 2. Moisten sponges with sweetened water and drop these into boiling water whenever the ants cover them. 3. Many substances are recommended to place on shelves to drive away ants. Among these are red pepper, powdered borax, walnut leaves, pennyroyal, cedar oil, oil of cloves, etc., but nothing is as good as destroying the nest.—Farm Journal.

## RECLAIMING OUR VAST AREA OF SWAMP LANDS

Bill Introduced in Congress for Reclamation of Inundated Lands Under System Similar to that Adopted for Desert Lands.

Of late years the public has had offered no little information regarding the watering of dry lands to make the desert bloom; and now there are signs public attention is to be called to the draining of swamp lands and the transforming of these waste places.

Recently a bill was introduced in congress for the reclamation of swamp lands under a system similar to that adopted for the reclamation of the deserts in the southwest. As yet only a beginning has been made, a beginning that probably will some day lead to legislative action.

The total area of our swamp lands is impressive, and it stands to reason this large portion of territory will some day be coveted by our fast-increasing population. "We are feeding now nearly 80,000,000 of people within the boundaries of our own country and sending enough material abroad to clothe and feed an almost equal number." And when one considers the advantages offered by the swamp lands one wonders why experiments have not sooner been made in their reclamation. Authorities tell us swamp lands can be reclaimed as cheaply as arid lands. Once drained, swamp land is drained for good. Drained lands are more fertile than the average agricultural soil, require little or no artificial fertilizing. And, what is of decided importance, generally these lands are located in the midst of well settled regions, a market near at hand, transportation provided. And not only for utilization of waste lands is it urged the swamps be drained, but because many of them are such a menace to health. In an article on "Reclamation of Salt Marsh Lands," in the circular bureau of soils, department of agri-

culture, attention is called to the fact that marshes and stagnant pools are the principal breeding places of mosquitoes. Science has shown that mosquitoes are the most common, if not the only means of conveying malarial germs into the human system; and that mosquitoes are the only proved cause of the infection of yellow fever. In many vast areas of land have been abandoned because of the mosquito pest. While our salt marshes do not seem to present the conditions necessary for the breeding of the species of malaria mosquitoes in this country, they are breeding places for immense numbers of other mosquitoes that prove a pest to persons and to stock, in some cases so troublesome they lower the valuation of the land.

Engineers believe the everglades of Florida can be drained, and here would be added to our rich lands 7,000,000 tillable acres. There are 5,000,000 acres of swamp lands in Michigan, between 6,000,000 and 8,000,000 acres in Minnesota, 4,000,000 in Wisconsin. In New Jersey and Virginia there are large areas. Salt marshes are prominent features of nearly all the states bordering the Atlantic and Pacific.

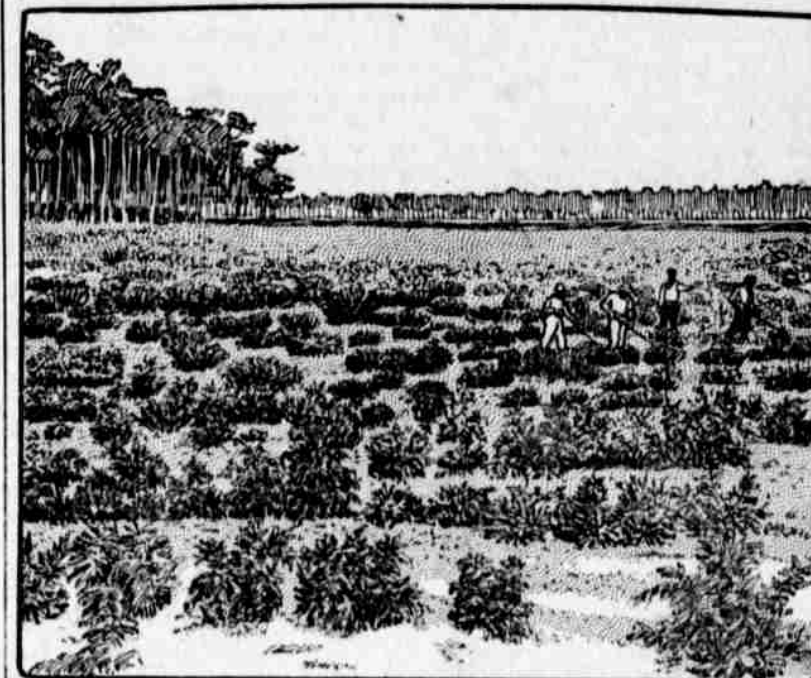
In preparing this article we have found it difficult to get any very recent writings on the subject of the reclaiming of the swamps, but are looking shortly for a flood of literature on the subject. Some years ago quite a good deal was said, a crusade started for the reclamation of our salt marshes; their value as farming lands emphasized, and that in the existing state they were a serious menace to the health of the people living in their vicinity. Notable among the government reports issued at the time was Shaler's "Sea-Coast Marshes of the United States," and Nesbit's "Tidal Marshes." Writing on the sea-coast marshes of the eastern part of the country, Shaler said: "The great advantage of the northern marsh areas is found in the fact that they generally are near the large centers of population of the country, where they will have a high value as market garden soils or fields for the raising of hay. When brought into their best state such areas will, measured by the price of other lands in the same neighborhood, have a value of not less than \$200 an acre. As the total reclaimable area between New York and Portland (Me.) probably exceeds 200,000 acres, the money value of their best state will amount to at least \$40,000,000. The cost of reclaiming these lands and reducing them to cultivation should not exceed the fifth of this sum."

Shaler spoke of the need for well skilled engineering direction in the reclaiming of the marshes, and that it was to be regretted the experiments had not been directed by some one trained in the work—as in the very successful work on the northern shores of Europe.

In Europe salt marshes are considered the most fertile of lands. For many years past large areas in Denmark, Belgium and Holland have been under cultivation. The Fens in England have been diked and ditched and about a million acres of matchless fertility been reclaimed.

There are many kinds of salt marshes; some bare mud flats without vegetation; others with heavy growth of grass, sometimes there is a sod a foot and more thick. It is a comparatively slow process to get the salt lands rid of water and saltness, but in those cases where proper precautions have been taken, sufficient time and labor allowed, the lands have given good returns. The author of the circular says it is generally conceded one acre of reclaimed salt marsh is worth four or five acres of upland, and that according to the well substantiated figures of Shaler, the cost of reclamation should not exceed one-fifth the final value of the land.

The Yankee farmer has found out that a certain class of bog land can be turned to profitable account in growing the cranberry, but when consideration is given the extent of our swamp



RECLAIMED SWAMP LAND NEAR THE EVERGLADES.

lands it would seem nothing has been done in the developing of the possibilities that lie therein. Shaler, writing in Science in 1886, argues for the utilization of our swamps and gives information in regard to the various classes of swamps in the United States. "These neglected districts are of great extent and very varied nature. They consist, in part, of land which is somewhat less fertile than the best soils, but which in every other respect is fit for tillage. \* \* \* A preliminary study of the field has shown the remarkable fact that we have left untouched in the region east of the Mississippi districts of easily drained swamp lands amounting to more than 50,000 square miles of area. The inundated lands of the lower Mississippi remain in the state in which they were when first seen by men, while similar areas in England were long ago won to the state of the most fertile fields of that country."

"Our American inundated lands are divisible into several classes, determined by the condition of their origin. Of these the most important are the tide water marshes, the lacustrine swamps of the glaciated district, the delta swamps of the Mississippi, and the class of wet lands or upland swamps where the marshy condition is due to the action of plant in retaining water under the surfaces of considerable districts."

"Preliminary studies of the great area of fresh water marshes, extending from the mouth of the James river south to Albemarle sound, show that in that district this class of marshes covers an area of about 4,000 square miles. \* \* \* This class of marshes can easily and cheaply be drained and, when so improved, they afford exceedingly rich soils. Along the outer margin of these vast morasses, some hundred thousands acres have been won to culture. These lands are remarkably fertile. It seems likely that of these easily reclaimed upland morasses, resembling the Dismal Swamp, there is a total area in the southern states of not less than 25,000 square miles. In the northern states the sea of improvable swamp land is less extensive, but there is not a state in which they do not constitute an important part of the land reserve which the coming generation will be glad to use."

CHRISTOPHER WEBSTER.

## A COMMONPLACE MAN.

BY ASA PRATT.

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Homer Dent was a very plain sort of a person. He had been a very plain sort of a boy and an exceedingly plain sort of a youth and now he was a most conspicuously plain young man.

He had always worked hard and received the minimum compensation therefor. As a boy he did the heavy end of the chores and his brother got the holidays and the praise. As a youth he did the hard studying and always remained at the foot of the class while other fellows walked away with the prizes. As a young man he was always given the hard and disagreeable tasks at the store and when there was a promotion in sight somebody else got it.

Homer did not complain, however, but plodded on, living out the law of his being. He never was jealous of those who were advanced over him. In fact he rejoiced in their good fortune. To be sure he grieved at times that none of the gifts of the gods were his, but he laid it all to some defect in his character. To be sure he was a trifle slow and not at all brilliant, but he was as steady and reliable as a plow-horse and his employers knew, even as his parents and teachers had known, that when he was given a task it was sure to be done no matter how long it took. But the high places were for those with more spectacular qualities and nobody ever really thought of Homer when they were to be filled. Truth be told Homer never thought of going after them himself. In fact Homer never pushed himself. Folks said he was not ambitious.

But the years with all their toil and hardships and disappointment brought one great joy and light to Homer's life. It was a woman, of course, and her dainty, feminine ways gave the love-starved lad a glimpse into a new and marvelous world. He never ceased to wonder that she crowned him with her favors—he who ever had been a bystander in all the joys and softer side of life.

The result, by easy to guess. He became her abject and devoted slave. Her lightest wish was law and there was no sacrifice too great, no endeavor too strenuous for him to make at her most simple suggestion. Because she loved society he plunged into the gayties of the town, where he cut a most sorry figure, as he was only too painfully conscious and where he became the butt of the clever ones, as he was in all the walks of life he assayed. Because she approved of religion he smothered his convictions and haunted the church of her denomination, studying its creed with desperate earnestness and blindly accepting its code. He even attempted golf and as a last sacrifice joined a home study circle where after a hard day's work he sternly kept himself awake.

And the woman. Well, she was a daughter of Eve, and having failed to attract any very big fish and having arrived at the period of a maiden's life when she begins to realize that it is time to cast an anchor to the windward, she turned to Homer. Not that she was old or devoid of charms, but she had set her standard rather high and the knight of her dreams had not appeared. Besides she was a young woman of discrimination and she saw below the commonplace exterior of this simple hearted man, the true gold of his unselfish character. She appreciated this and she shrewdly realized that with him she would be absolutely queen.

But, ah, ye daughters of Eve, whenever did reason govern your hearts and your desires? Whenever did not—and when does not and will not—the gay cavalier fire your hearts and imaginations and make the plain sturdy plow-boy seem commonplace and impossible? And who shall say that the fair Agnes did not accept Homer with a mental reservation? And who shall say that the vision of the gay cavalier did not still abide in her imagination?

Be all that as it may the fact remains that one glorious evening she plighted her troth to Homer with a dainty gasp of surrender which so filled him with joy and reverence that it must abide with him forever. It was many weeks before he could thoroughly believe that this splendid creature, this wonderful being had selected him of all the world for a mate and he bowed in reverence and thanksgiving every time he thought of it, which was some thousand times a day.

Always a frugal and saving, he now began to lay aside money with more than a miser's avarice against the blissful day when Agnes should come to his arms. He was not impatient, as most lovers are. It was enough for him to know that she was his. He could wait. He had been compelled to wait for everything ever since he was born and he had learned the lesson of patience. Probably this was a mistake because women like to be sought ardently, and impatiently—but how was he to know that, this being the only woman he had ever known?

Well, it was the same old story. While he waited and toiled patiently, secure in his happiness, the cavalier came along, smiled upon his mistress and poor plodding Homer was forgotten. Just how it all happened has been forgotten in the chronicles of the town.

However, one T. Seymour Esterly appeared on the social horizon of the town with more fine clothes than the Johnnies ever had seen and with an automobile and a debonair air and much superciliousness. He was there, he announced, for rest and recreation after a strenuous season on the stock market in Wall Street. Need it be recorded how he swept everything before him? How mamma courted him and papa gave him little dinners at the club, how

clubs and societies strove for the privilege of entertaining him as an honored guest—and how the maidens, betrothed and unbetrothed, smiled upon him? Nay, the dullest imagination can see all that.

Then one day the town was startled with an elopement. Yes, sad as it was, Agnes had eloped with T. Seymour Esterly in most spectacular manner, leaving a dramatic note to Homer that she had made a great mistake, but had saved both him and herself by recognizing the fact that they were not mates before it was too late—thanks to the fact that her true affinity had appeared. And she begged him to forget her unworthy self and to find some maiden who could appreciate his good and true qualities. As though she did not well know that there never could be any other woman in his simple honest life.

The months sped and strange reports came regarding the eloping couple. The final one was that the Mr. T. Seymour Esterly was a common adventurer—in fact valet of a distinguished member of the stock exchange who, while taking a trip abroad had left his establishment in the hands of his valet. And the valet with the curb off had started out in search of adventure with his employer's automobile and clothes and had succeeded in inflaming the imagination of the ambitious country belle and inducing her to elope with him. And sadder than all it was whispered that he had not married her at all and that she was living in miserable quarters the very creature of his whims.

Homer Dent had survived the blow with the stoicism which ever had been his saving grace. God alone knows what it meant to him and the hours of mortal agony he suffered, but he made no sign and plodded on as he ever had.

And one day many, many months after the catastrophe there came to him a letter—oh such a pathetic and hopeless and tear-stained letter from the lady of his dreams. The end had come. She was deserted, alone and without friends, money or hope. Her own people had cast her off—and she did not blame them. Her board was paid for the balance of the week. Then she had resolved to end the whole miserable business and let the silent river tell the story if it would. Only she could not go out of the world without letting Homer know how keenly she appreciated her mistake and how much better she knew than he, his nobility of character.

"I am saying these things, not to justify myself nor with any hope of the future," she wrote. "But I want you to know your own worth which you always have underestimated and discredited. People in this world are taken on their own valuation. Since I went away from the truest lover ever maiden had I have seen many men of all degrees, and I want to tell you for your own good that you are better and stronger and braver than any of them. When I am gone I wish you might forgive me for my disloyalty to you—God knows I have suffered enough for it. And I wish I might awaken in you some conception of your own power. If you could appreciate it all success and all happiness would be yours. All business success would open to you if only you would demand it—and all women would lie at your feet if you would command instead of beg. This is the only reparation I can make—to awaken you to your own possibilities. It is a poor one, but believe me it is attempted in all sincerity and with all the love which woman can feel toward man—a love intensified a thousand times because she knows she has sacrificed it. And it should have all the weight of a voice from the grave—because next Monday I will be numbered with the dead."

Long and prayerfully did Homer Dent struggle with this letter. It rekindled all the passion of his first and only love and he realized all the terrible consequences of her fall. Finally in the cold gray dawn he threw his meager wardrobe into a trunk and wrote a letter to his employer resigning his position and stating he was going away to be married and would not return.

Later he drew his money from the savings bank and boarded a train for the city praying he would arrive in time.

### What He Heard.

There was a man in Kansas City engaged in the piano business who has long been reputed to be hard of hearing. There are those among his friends who doubt the genuineness of his affliction. They believe his custom of holding his hand to his ear and asking for questions to be repeated is more a matter of habit than anything else.

Recently the deaf man and a friend were seeing the city by gaslight. In the course of the evening the friend's funds ran out.

"I'd like to borrow five, if you can spare it," he said.

"What d'ye say?" with his hand to his ear, "what's that?"

The friend had decided that five might run him short, so he said as loudly as he could: "Can you lend me ten dollars till to-morrow?"

The deaf man dropped his hand from his ear and remarked: "I thought you said five!"—Kansas City Times.

### Up-to-Date.

"Are you a burglar, my man?" asked the householder.

"No," responded the man with the dark lantern, "I am an agent of the Society to Limit the Size of Great Fortunes."—N. Y. Herald.